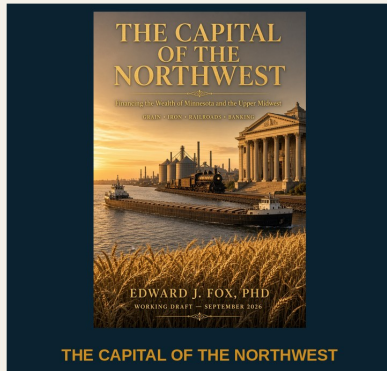
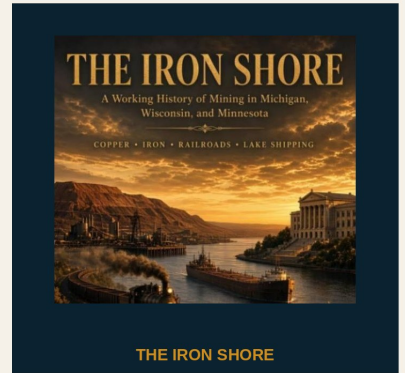
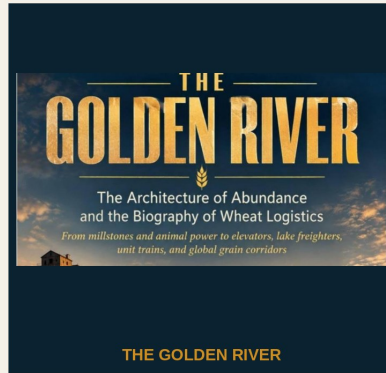


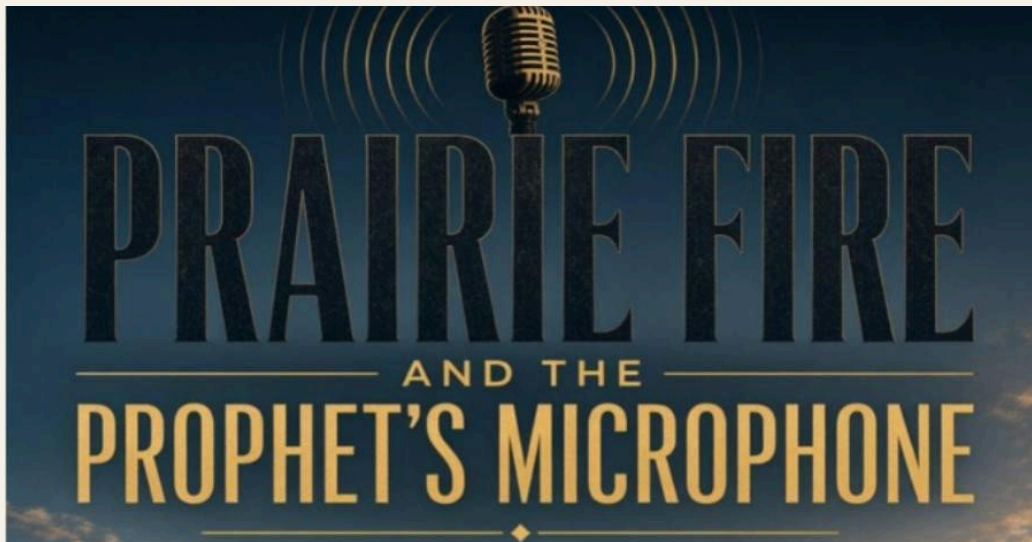
FIVE PAPERS. ONE REGION. ONE LARGER STORY.

RADIO → GRAIN → IRON → CAPITAL → COMMON WEALTH



EDWARD J. FOX, PhD • SEPTEMBER 2026

Taken together, the five papers move through different parts of the same Upper Midwest system: political culture and institutions; the movement of grain; mineral and industrial development; the capital that financed regional wealth; and the working people whose labor made those systems possible.



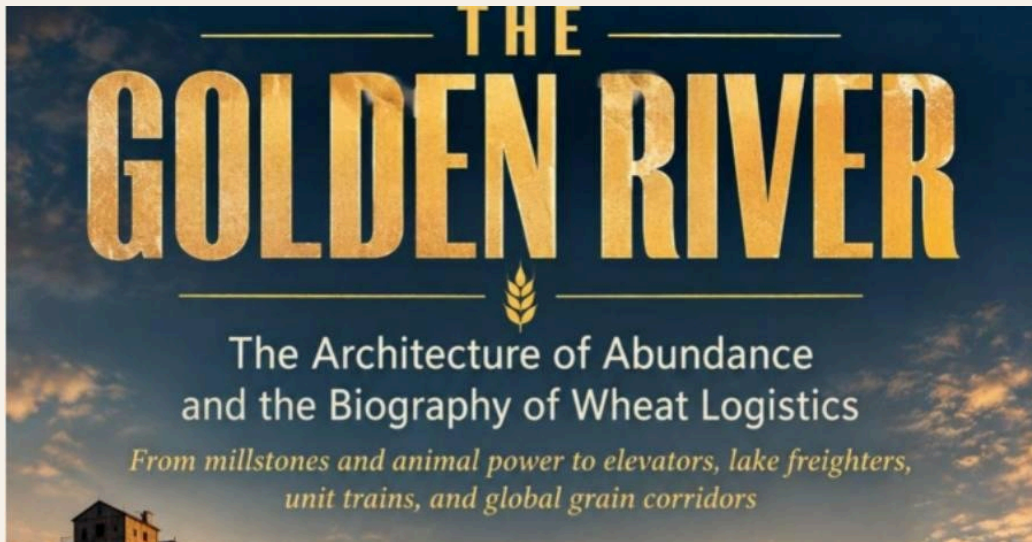
PRAIRIE FIRE AND THE PROPHET'S MICROPHONE

RADIO • RELIGION • POLITICAL DIVERGENCE

How did Alberta and Saskatchewan, created together and shaped by similar prairie conditions, develop different political traditions?

Alberta and Saskatchewan entered Confederation together in 1905 with the same wheat economy, and in the Depression they shared the same grievances. Both turned to preachers who became politicians: William Aberhart, whose radio sermons built Social Credit in Alberta, and Tommy Douglas, who led the CCF in Saskatchewan.

The paper argues that the medium through which a movement is founded shapes its organizational form, and that the form outlasts the medium, the doctrine, and the founder. Alberta built a broadcast-born politics of direct appeal that runs to today's separatist movement; Saskatchewan built a delegate democracy rooted in cooperatives. Saskatchewan inherited institutional memory. Alberta inherited narrative memory.



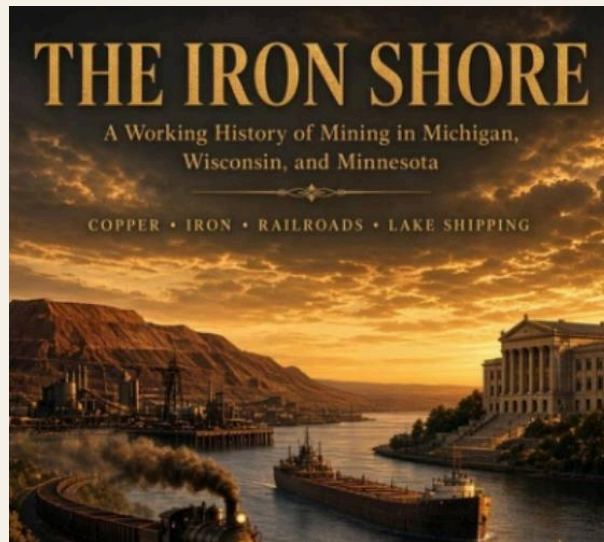
THE GOLDEN RIVER

GRAIN • RAILROADS • ELEVATORS • GREAT LAKES

How does a field of wheat become a global commodity?

The history of wheat is as much a history of logistics as of farming. The book follows grain from millstones and animal power to Joseph Dart's 1842 steam-powered elevator in Buffalo, the first concrete elevator outside Minneapolis in 1899, lake freighters, the St. Lawrence Seaway, unit trains, and the global trading firms that dominate the trade today.

Along the way it follows the farmers who fought the power of railroads and elevator companies, including North Dakota's Nonpartisan League and its state-owned mill and elevator. It closes with a firsthand account of building Cargill's Elevator B in Duluth in the 1970s.



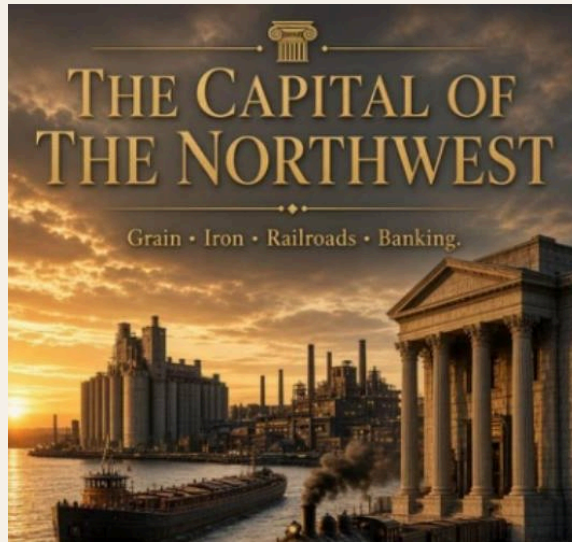
THE IRON SHORE

COPPER • IRON • RAILROADS • LAKE SHIPPING

How did the mineral wealth of the Upper Midwest shape its economy, communities, and politics?

Indigenous people worked Lake Superior's native copper thousands of years before commercial mining began. The paper follows the Keweenaw copper boom of the mid-1800s, Minnesota's Vermilion, Mesabi, and Cuyuna iron ranges, Wisconsin's Gogebic Range, the ore docks of Duluth, and the shift from natural ore to taconite.

It argues that mining shaped the region's politics as much as its economy. The same ranges that supplied American industry produced lasting conflicts over labor, taxation, and the environment, and those conflicts continue today in the debate over copper-nickel mining in the Duluth Complex and in the politics of Minnesota's 8th District.



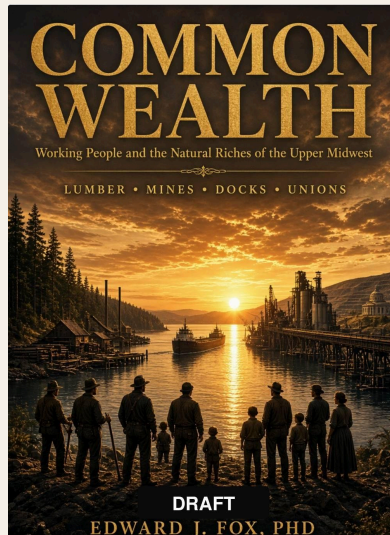
THE CAPITAL OF THE NORTHWEST

GRAIN • IRON • RAILROADS • BANKING

Where did the money behind the Upper Midwest's expanding economy come from, and how was regional wealth financed and reinvested?

Duluth moved the region's commodities, but the Twin Cities organized the money behind them, a division the Federal Reserve confirmed in 1914 by placing the Ninth District bank in Minneapolis. The paper follows farm credit, grain finance, banking, insurance, and investment across the region.

It also shows how often the region's wealth was owned from elsewhere. Jay Cooke's Philadelphia money made and nearly unmade early Duluth, Rockefeller and U.S. Steel took control of the Mesabi, and lumber fortunes moved west with the pine. The paper closes with the Duluth steel plant, from its opening to the cleanup of its site today.



COMMON WEALTH

LUMBER • MINES • DOCKS • UNIONS

Who built the Upper Midwest's economy—and what happened when the work was fixed in place?

The paper's argument is direct: no industry in the region was easy to organize, and businesses that could leave were the hardest of all. The lumber industry moved west and left its workers largely unorganized; they won only in the 1937 timber strikes. Mines, docks, and elevators could not move, and after early defeats on the Mesabi and in the Copper Country, their workers won lasting gains once cooperative traditions, Farmer-Labor politics, and federal labor law came together.

Duluth, home to both AFL craft unions and CIO industrial unions, is the central case study. The paper closes with deindustrialization and the rise of hospitals and public institutions as the region's new fixed industries.